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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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Policy of Yugoslavs Toward Refugees Between June 1948 and 4 August 1950

1. Soon after the Tito-Cominform break in June 1948, large numbers of refugees from Soviet-dominated countries began to flee to Yugoslavia hoping to find protection from Cominform persecution and an opportunity to continue their flight to the West. However, from the summer of 1948 until 4 August 1950, the Yugoslav Government did not differentiate between political refugees and common criminals. It employed a policy of brutality and terror toward all. The two following factors were probably responsible for this attitude on the part of Yugoslavia:
 - a. The Yugoslavs had no desire of further alienating neighboring Cominform-dominated countries as long as there was some chance of repairing the recently ruptured relations; and
 - b. In line with the governments of the satellite countries, Yugoslav "Communist consciousness" still regarded the political refugees as "class enemies."
2. Among the various political refugees who fled to Yugoslavia following the Tito-Cominform rift were many Rumanians. Upon arrival on Yugoslav territory, all Rumanian refugees were detained in either the Kikinda or the Becikeret (sic) refugee camps for investigation. After an arbitrary period of time, certain refugees were assigned to work in coal mines at Bosnia or Rudnik. The rest of the refugees who were apparently considered recalcitrants or otherwise unsuitable for release, were quartered in a concentration camp for political refugees at Zrenjanin.¹

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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3. Until 5 August 1950, neither the refugees who worked in the mines nor the refugees in the Zrenjanin concentration camp had any type of organization to represent or protect their interests, nor was such an organization proposed or even allowed by the Yugoslavs. The Yugoslavs showed no indication that they were at all concerned with the refugees, inasmuch as no particular attempt was made by them to penetrate the refugee communities with spies or informers. Compatible with this apathetic attitude, conditions in the camps and various working sites were miserable, and refugees had no protection against the brutal treatment meted out by UDB personnel.²
4. Individuals or groups of refugees frequently disappeared from the concentration camp or work sites. These persons were usually forcibly expelled from Yugoslavia into neighboring satellite countries. The standard determining the selection of the particular refugees to be ousted is unknown.
5. In the spring of 1950 disturbances which occurred in the Zrenjanin concentration camp alarmed Yugoslav authorities. One refugee, a former Rumanian officer, was killed while attempting to climb the barbed wire fence which surrounded the camp, while another refugee was brutally beaten. A committee of inquiry under General Ioja (lmu) was sent to Zrenjanin. Ioja "conducted an investigation" and promised the refugees more work and freedom. Soon after Ioja's departure, groups of refugees were "planted" on the Trieste border and allowed to "escape". On a later occasion, when Ioja again visited the camp, he informed the refugees that Yugoslavia had become involved in serious difficulties as a consequence of these escapes. He announced that henceforth instead of being released, all refugees would be permitted to work in Yugoslavia. Some of the refugees accepted Ioja's offer, but the rest remained in the Zrenjanin refugee camp until it was closed on 4 August 1950. Refugees still in the camp were taken to the Trieste border and allowed to escape.

Change in Yugoslav Attitude Toward Refugees

6. With the closing of the refugee camp at Zrenjanin, the Yugoslavs adopted a new policy which lasted until about August 1951. During this period the Yugoslavs probably were subject to increased pressure from the West. Presumably, in an effort to placate Western allies, the Yugoslavs at last acknowledged the refugees as a special group and proposed some plans for the solution of the problem. This effort, which lacked strong motivation and was implemented without determination, had the following characteristics:
 - a. A branch responsible for the handling of various refugee groups was created within the Ministry of Internal Affairs at Belgrade. The officers assigned to this branch made frequent inspections of the various refugee areas. General Ioja was made chief of the Rumanian section of the Refugee Branch;
 - b. Upon arrival in Yugoslavia, Rumanian refugees were no longer sent to refugee camps but to a newly-established rest house in Vrsac. After a debriefing period the refugees were allowed to settle in assigned areas, where they lived under superficial surveillance but with sufficient freedom to encourage many of them to escape. Some succeeded in escaping but others were apprehended and sentenced to terms of one to three months in prison. Even after release from prison, some of the refugees re-attempted to escape; however, at no time did the Yugoslavs appear to regard these attempts at escape very seriously;

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- c. A Rumanian club was set up in Svetozarevo³ by the local UDB. The club was equipped with a radio, piano and library of Rumanian-language books; and
- d. The UDB appointed Stanoiu (fnu)⁴ "president" of the Rumanian refugees. Stanoiu, although disliked by the Rumanian refugees, was the group's principal link with the UDB. The UDB attempted without success to organize a pro-Tito committee among the group of refugees who disliked Stanoiu. Later, the UDB endeavored to utilize two of the refugees, Galin (fnu) and Constantin Alimanisteanu, in forming a pro-Tito refugee committee. These efforts also failed.

New Phase in Yugoslav Attitude Toward Refugees, August 1951 - March 1952

- 7. A new period in Yugoslav-refugee relations began in August 1951 and continued through March 1952. This period reflected a new approach to the question of treatment of Iron Curtain refugees. Factors responsible for this new policy were:
 - a. The desire for internal consolidation;
 - b. The crystallization of a Titoist "Communist consciousness"; and
 - c. The reorientation of the Yugoslav external policy toward the West.
- 8. The new policy was presumably drafted by the Refugee Branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but was not an instrument devised deliberately to attain new political objectives. The policy was based on a vague recognition of the potential value of the refugees as eventual political assets; however, the lack of clear directives and objectives precluded proper exploitation. The new policy of the Yugoslav Government toward the refugees was manifested as follows:
 - a. The UDB reached the conclusion that it was essential to separate the refugees who might be potential political assets from those who were obvious liabilities. Hence, all refugees judged to be of good behavior and of opportunistic or flexible views, retained their relative freedom. Refugees who were out-spokenly anti-Communist or anti-Titoist, or who encouraged or incited fellow refugees to resist Yugoslav intervention in refugee matters, or who had a record of attempted escapes, were sent to a prison camp in Kovacica.⁵ Later, they were transferred to a refugee camp at Jesenice, whence they were tacitly encouraged to attempt to escape [redacted]
 - b. Special attention was given to newly-arrived refugees who gave the impression of being of potential value under the new Yugoslav refugee policy. These individuals were given excellent treatment, first in the rest home at Vrsac⁶ and later, at the Hotel Praga in Belgrade.
 - c. The Yugoslavs, disregarding his unwillingness, appointed Stefan Raica as president of the Rumanian refugees in Svetozarevo on 19 December 1951.
 - d. The UDB selected the most promising of the Rumanian refugees and offered them tempting advantages if they would be willing to work for the UDB abroad. These missions would entail reporting on the activities of Rumanian refugees abroad, defecting specified refugees, reporting any

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anti-Yugoslav attitudes held by individuals or groups, and encouraging and inciting splits within various refugee organizations.

Present Policy of Yugoslav Government Toward Refugees

9. The last phase in the Yugoslav treatment of satellite refugees was initiated in January 1952, at which time General Dusan Mugosa⁷, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Serbia, allegedly delivered a speech before the Central Committee in which he expounded his views on the importance of the refugees relative to the future of Titoism in the Balkans. Mugosa's recommendations were evidently approved by Marshal Tito, inasmuch as the Central Committee granted Mugosa the authority to investigate the refugee problem. Later, Mugosa delivered a second speech in which he outlined the facts he had uncovered during the course of his investigation, and requested the authority to implement his views. As a result, the responsibility for the handling of Rumanian refugees was transferred from the Refugee Branch of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to General Mugosa, who was to act in the name of the Central Committee. Clear-cut objectives were defined and new tactics which would fit into an overall political problem were applied. The most recent policy of the Yugoslav Government, as directed by General Mugosa, has been manifested as follows:
 - a. During early spring 1952, a decision was reached to form a Rumanian National Committee in Svetozarevo. Stanoiu, who was apparently the best-qualified candidate, was again appointed "president ad interim." Stanescu was instructed to draft proposals for the formation of a "Rumanian National Committee". These proposals were to make provision for the establishment of cadre sections and contain plans for agitation and propaganda. In April 1952, Stanoiu submitted his proposals to Mugosa who rejected them and offered numerous amendments. Stanoiu, who was under the impression that he was indispensable, refused to accept the amendments. Just about this time, Captain Ion Ghinea, a former political commissar in the Rumanian Air Force, landed in Yugoslavia in a stolen plane. Ghinea, an apparent opportunist, sensed the opportunity presented by the impasse between General Mugosa and Stanoiu and shortly after his arrival in Yugoslavia delivered a pro-Tito speech. Consequently he was accepted by Mugosa as a more appropriate candidate for the projected "Rumanian National Committee". Stanoiu retired to Vrsac where he fomented dissatisfaction against Ghinea and Mugosa.⁸ Ghinea was appointed president of the Committee of the Association of Rumanian Political Refugees in Yugoslavia, which was provisionally established at Svetozarevo on 7 July 1952.⁹ The Committee was composed of 15 refugees who were to elect a five-man central committee, namely a president, a secretary-general and three members.
 - b. Simultaneously with the formation of the above committee, Yugoslav authorities became aware of the decreasing numbers of Rumanian refugees in Yugoslavia (the "base" of their national committee) and decided to make every effort to halt the departure of Rumanian refugees from Yugoslavia. The refugee camp at Jesenice was disbanded and all refugees were interned in a newly-established camp at Gerovo, from which escape was reputedly impossible. In line with new directives from the Central Committee, the camp authorities instructed the various refugee groups to set up "national committees". The Rumanian refugees established the National Committee of the Rumanian Emigres from Gerovo on 6 August 1952. Reorganized on 15 September 1952, this committee was merged with Ghinea's Committee of the Association of Rumanian Political Refugees in Yugoslavia on 13 February 1953.

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- c. The Yugoslavs skillfully exploited the desire of Rumanian refugees at Geroovo to reach the West. They first permitted the refugees to write to foreign embassies in Belgrade for aid in reaching western countries, and later prohibited such correspondence on the grounds that the various embassies would not permit refugees to enter their countries, the implication being that refugees were undesirable elements. With this hope of reaching the West shattered, and the possibility of work in Yugoslavia prohibited to them, the Rumanian refugees were thrown into a state of despair. This policy was rescinded, however, and the refugees were encouraged to remain and work in Yugoslavia. This appeared to be a substantial concession and many refugees accepted it as the happiest solution.
- d. Rumanian refugees are recruited for physical penetrations of their homeland.
- e. The Geroovo refugee camp was disbanded on 1 March 1953, and its residents were allowed to settle and work in specified areas.

Comments

- 1. This has been reported as the receiving center for Rumanian refugees.

2.

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- 3. Considered as the largest Rumanian refugee center in Yugoslavia

- 4. Reported variously as Eremia or Remija Stanoiu (Stanoju or Strahoju), who was president of the Union of Rumanian Refugees, founded in Kragujevac in February 1951.

- 5. This attitude on the part of the Yugoslav authorities has been mentioned previously. various Rumanian refugees who opposed Yugoslav (UDE) intervention were sent to concentration camp at Kovacica.

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6.

- 7. Organizer of Albanian Partisan bands during World War II and organizer of the Albanian Communist Party in November 1941. Mugosa also directs the activities of Bulgarian and Albanian refugees in Yugoslavia.

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- 8. Stanoiu was not highly regarded by Yugoslav authorities, who were anxious to get more impressive personalities into the Rumanian Political Refugee Association. Ghinea was mentioned as having the matter in hand.

General
Mugosa was anxious to make Gheorghe Grosu head of the association rather than Stanoiu, who was favored by the refugees.

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9.

[Redacted]

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[Redacted] At this time, Gheorghe
Grosu and Ion Ghinea were both named to the Executive Committee of the
Association.

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